

Prospective Experimental Program Concepts

May 2009

Overview of this Report

The Commission adopted revised Experimental Program Standards at its March 2008 meeting, <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2008-03/2008-03-3A.pdf>. At the May 2008 COA meeting, staff presented information on the technical assistance meetings that were held focusing on Experimental Programs and procedures for programs to follow in proposing new Experimental Programs, <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/coa-agendas/2008-05/2008-05-item-17.pdf>. The procedures were detailed, including a possible timeline for the submission and approval process. This agenda item presents two concepts for experimental programs being considered by currently accredited institutions for the COA's discussion.

Staff Recommendation

This is an information item only.

Background

The purpose of experimental programs is described in the Experimental Programs Handbook:

The experimental program option is designed to encourage innovations in educator preparation and investigation of those innovations, with the aim of increasing the profession's understanding of professional learning and improving professional practice for the benefit of all students in California. Experimental programs were provided for in Education Code 44273(a) as a way for programs of "merit and the potential of improving the quality of service authorized by the credential" to be developed. In the past, few programs have been submitted under this option. The revised Experimental Program standards take into account this under-utilization and are designed to encourage innovation with accountability to the profession. (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/Experimental-Program.doc>; accessed on April 29, 2009)

The procedures the COA adopted to review and approve experimental programs are contained in the Experimental Programs Handbook. Presented in Appendix A is the page of the handbook that contains these procedures. A number of institutions are currently working with staff on prospective experimental programs. Two institutions have submitted documents of varying lengths describing the issues, questions, or problems the program will be designed to address. After the COA's review and discussion of the two concepts, staff will continue to work with these institutions to further develop these experimental programs. At future COA meetings, staff will bring additional experimental program concepts forward.

Experimental Program Concepts

Great Leaders for Great Schools (California Polytechnic University, Pomona)

California Polytechnic University (Cal Poly), Pomona, has been funded by the United States Department of Education (ED) to develop and implement a tier I administrator preparation program in cooperation with the Pomona Unified School District (PUSD). The goal of the program is to train 30 "practice-ready" school administrators for PUSD who will possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to turnaround at-risk secondary and elementary schools in the district." (At-risk schools are defined as those that have been designated as Program Improvement schools by

the California Department of Education. The grant program required the IHE to partner with an at-risk school district or schools.) The program is intended to 1) help the PUSD schools move out of the at-risk status by increase the proportion of students who test at the proficient and above levels, 2) increase the retention of talented new administrators within the district, and 3) prepare leaders who can create an ongoing culture of organizational renewal and reform within the PUSD schools.

The program is modeled after the Delta State University (Mississippi) program identified as an exemplar through the Stanford University School of Education's nationwide search for effective administrator preparation programs (Darling-Hammond, Cohen, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2006). The institution proposes to study the impact of particular features of the preparation program (e.g., candidate selection, apprenticeship elements, mentoring, and curriculum) on the candidates and to compare the program against traditional programs with regard to completers' readiness to move quickly into leadership roles, capacity to improve student performance, and persistence in public school leadership positions.

Cal Teach (University of California, Berkeley)

The College of Education at the University of California, Berkeley (UCB) proposes to develop an experimental credential program to be implemented in fall 2010 that will prepare single-subject mathematics and science teachers to work in urban schools. The proposed program is a response to the need to develop and retain more high quality teachers in mathematics, science, and engineering, particularly for urban schools. The institution proposes to develop a program that integrates undergraduate subject matter preparation, teacher preparation, and induction into a seamless, seven-year program. By integrating these components of professional preparation, the program will be able to provide instruction in content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and inquiry simultaneously and continuously and to provide a variety of field experiences in different classrooms throughout the seven year program. Early field experiences supported by integrated instruction are expected to help candidates learn and internalize effective classroom practices more readily than occurs in traditional programs.

The research questions currently proposed by the institution seek to:

- 1) Describe the developmental trajectory of candidates' beliefs about their subject matter, teaching, pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), and learning, and
- 2) Describe how the Cal Teach model fosters candidates' positive beliefs about subject matter instruction, teacher preparation, PCK, and inquiry processes.

Program staff will focus on developing valid and reliable assessment instruments to measure candidates' beliefs and PCK. Once these tools are completed, the program intends to compare CalTeach program completers' beliefs and PCK with those of completers from traditional single subject mathematics and science teacher preparation programs.

After the COA's discussion of the experimental program concepts, staff will utilize the committee's feedback to guide institutions as they continue to develop their proposals. The full proposals will be reviewed by peer reviewers and when the reviewers find the proposal meets the Experimental Program standards, the prospective experimental program will be brought back to the COA for approval.

Appendix A

Procedures for Submitting and Implementing an Experimental Program

Procedures for Submitting an Experimental Program for Commission Approval

An experimental program can be developed and submitted at any time in the seven year accreditation cycle. Once approved, the program is incorporated into the institution/program sponsor's accreditation cohort activities.

- Institution or program sponsor identifies an issue, question, or problem that can be addressed through a preparation program that varies from the Commission's adopted program standards.
- Institution or program sponsor submits a 3-5 page paper describing the issue, question, or problem to the Commission.
- Staff reviews the proposal brief and provides technical assistance to the institution or program sponsor in developing the full program proposal. Staff reports to the Committee information regarding possible proposals.
- Institution or program sponsor submits the full proposal, addressing the Preconditions, Common Standards, and Standards for Experimental Programs.
- Program proposal is reviewed by a panel of educators (peer review). Reviewers may ask for additional information if the proposal does not initially meet the Experimental Program Standards.
- Program goes to the Committee on Accreditation for approval once the reviewers agree that the proposal meets the Experimental Program Standards.

Procedures for Implementing an Experimental Program

- Program begins implementation.
- Program participates in all accreditation activities in concert with the institution or program sponsors schedule.
- Program submits biennial reports focused on measures of candidate competence and an additional section focused on the evaluation, to date, of the experimental program.
- Program provides the Committee on Accreditation with a status report on the progress of the program half-way through the proposed timeline for the program.
- Program participates in Program Assessment according to the accreditation system.
- Candidates, graduates, faculty, and employers from the program participate in the site review activities as scheduled.
- Staff reviews biennial and evaluation reports. Recommendations for program continuance or interventions will be made to the Committee on Accreditation.
- Program submits a final evaluation of the program to the Committee on Accreditation, according to the approved Research Design, including next steps and plans for dissemination of program evaluation results to appropriate audiences (other California educator preparation programs, professional organization conferences, and journal articles, for example).